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MOSCOW'S INTERPRETATION OF DETENTE AND HELSINSKI

ANNCR:

THE INTERNAL AMERICAN DEBATE ABOUT DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS IN THE LIGHT OF SOVIET POLICIES AND ACTIONS AND AMERICAN WARNINGS ON THE POSSIBLE RESULTS OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN WEST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE LED TO CRITICAL COMMENTS IN THE SOVIET PRESS. VOA NEWS ANALYST JOHN ALBERT HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS:

VOICE:

WITH ALL THE DEBATE IN THIS COUNTRY, THERE IS BASIC AGREEMENT THAT THE CONTINUING MASSIVE MILITARY BUILDUP IN THE SOVIET UNION REQUIRES AMERICAN COUNTER MEASURES, IF THE STRATEGIC BALANCE IS TO BE MAINTAINED IN THE LONG RUN. BUT SOVIET COMMENTATORS DO NOT DEAL WITH THIS BASIC AGREEMENT. RATHER THEY PICK ON CHARGES IN THE AMERICAN DEBATE THAT DETENTE, OR THE RELAXATION OF TENSIONS, HAS ESSENTIALLY BEEN A ONE-WAY STREET IN FAVOR OF THE SOVIET UNION. THE SOVIET ARGUMENT IS, FIRST, THAT IT IS THE WEST, WHICH HAS BEEN ARMING, AND, SECOND, THAT BARRING PROGRESS IN THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION NEGOTIATIONS THE SOVIET UNION HAS TO INCREASE ITS DEFENSES.

THIS SOVIET ARGUMENT IGNORES THE FACT THAT APART FROM STRATEGIC WEAPONS THE SOVIET UNION HAS SYSTEMATICALLY STRENGTHENED ITS CONVENTIONAL FORCES, PARTICULARLY IN CENTRAL EUROPE, FAR BEYOND ANY DEFENSIVE NEEDS. WHAT MOSCOW DOES NOT ACKNOWLEDGE IS THAT IN A SITUATION OF ROUGH EQUIVALENCE IN STRATEGIC WEAPONS THE CHANCE OF

NUCLEAR WAR RECEDES. AND THUS IT IS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO AVOID IMBALANCES IN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. SUCH IMBALANCES COULD ENCOURAGE AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS WHICH IN TURN COULD LEAD TO A WIDER CONFLICT AND RECOURSE TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

AFTER YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS, THE VIENNA CONFERENCE ON MUTUAL BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS IS STILL STYMIED ON THE BASIC ISSUE OF SOVIET PREDOMINANCE IN TROOPS AND HEAVY WEAPONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE. MOSCOW INSISTS ON KEEPING THIS MILITARY ADVANTAGE BY ASKING FOR EQUAL PERCENTAGE CUTS IN OPPOSING FORCES, RATHER THAN SEEKING EQUALITY OF FORCE LEVELS.

THE SOVIET UNION ALSO HAS SIGNED THE HELSINKI AGREEMENTS, PLEDGING NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER NATIONS. IT CLAIMS IT IS AGAINST "IMPOSING" REVOLUTION ON ANYONE. BUT IN ANGOLA, THE SOVIET UNION USED ITS CUBAN ALLIES TO INTERVENE MASSIVELY WITH ARMS AND ARMED FORCES. AND SINCE HELSINKI, THE SOVIET UNION HAS CONCLUDED A NEW TREATY WITH EAST GERMANY WHICH CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS A REAFFIRMATION OF THE SO-CALLED BREZHNEV DOCTRINE WHICH STATES MOSCOW'S RIGHT TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. AND CERTAINLY LITTLE HAS HAPPENED IN SOVIET RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE SINCE HELSINKI WHICH GIVES ANY SUBSTANCE TO THE PLEDGES OF RESPECT FOR EACH COUNTRY'S RIGHT TO ITS OWN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT.

DESPITE THIS RECORD, AN EXPRESSION OF CONCERN BY SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER OVER POSSIBLE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN A WEST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT, BRINGS FROM

SOVIET COMMENTATORS A CLAIM THAT THIS IS A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENTS. THERE IS, OF COURSE, NOTHING IN THE HELSINKI AGREEMENTS WHICH FORBIDS THE DISCUSSION OF EVENTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND EXPRESSIONS OF APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL. WHAT THE HELSINKI AGREEMENTS DO FORBID IS THE USE OF FORCE OR THE THREAT OF FORCE IN DEALING WITH INTERNAL EVENTS IN SOVEREIGN NATIONS, THE TYPE OF INTERFERENCE THAT THE SOVIET UNION UNDERTOOK IN HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. AS THE "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR" OBSERVED IN AN EDITORIAL ON THIS SUBJECT, " LET THE SOVIETS ALLOW THE SAME FREEDOM OF COMPETITION OF POLITICAL IDEAS IN POLAND, HUNGARY, CZECHOSLOVAKIA THAT IS NOW PERMITTED IN ITALY, FRANCE, PORTUGAL."

WHAT MOSCOW IS ATTEMPTING TO DO WITH THE HELSINKI AGREEMENTS IS EXACTLY WHAT WESTERN CRITICS CHARGE IN THE CASE OF THE SOVIET INTERPRETATION OF DETENTE. WHATEVER MOSCOW DOES, IN ANGOLA OR IN PORTUGAL, IN ITS STRATEGIC OR CONVENTIONAL ARMS BUILDUP, IN ITS RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE IN GENERAL, IS FULLY JUSTIFIED BY MOSCOW. ANY CRITICISM IN THE WEST OF SOVIET POLICIES AND ACTIONS, OR EVEN A WESTERN WARNING ON COMMUNIST PARTY ACTIVITIES IN THE WEST, IS A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF THE WAY MOSCOW WANTS AGREEMENTS TO BE INTERPRETED. SOVIET COMMENTATORS SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED THAT AMERICANS REJECT THIS KIND OF INTERPRETATION AND FEEL DISILLUSIONED BY THE CONTRAST BETWEEN SOVIET WORDS AND SOVIET ACTIONS.

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